

# The College System in the Republic of China and its Revelation

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**Abstract:** Special time background affects the age education career, especially leading the development of higher education. The republic of China's economy, politics, culture and the change of the society had provided the opportunity and challenge to the development of China's university system, set the tone for the development of Chinese universities, influenced the development of modern university system. Based on the study of the evolution of the early stage of the university system of the republic of China, analysis the development of the later period of the republic of China university system, draws inspiration from it, points out the direction for the development of future university system.

**Keywords:** The republic of China; College system; Revelations

## 1. Introduction

In Chinese history, the Republic of China, an age of great upheaval and transformation and the end of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, can be specifically defined from the perish of Qing-dynasty to the founding of the People's Republic of China. Under this special historical condition, the higher education program of China also presented a unique development feature.

## 2. The Evolution of College System in Early the Republic of China (from 1912 to 1927)

The Republic of China is the starting point of the college education system in China. After the founding of the Republic of China on the New Year's Day in 1912, Cain Yampi was appointed as the first Minister of the Education and launched the new reform in the field of education. The reform gave the priority to the amendment of the school system. The first Chinese school system Gumbo school system, which was promulgated by the Qing government in the late Qing-dynasty, divided the education stages into three parts: the primary education (for three years), the secondary education (for five years) and the higher education (higher schools and college preparatory lasted for three years and college schools lasted from 3 to 4 years). On the basis of the Gumbo school system, the Qing government in 1904 issued the Regulations for the Confirmation of the College System which defined the teaching content, educational aims, subject arrangements of the colleges. The first school system which was established by the Qing government promoted the development of Chinese higher education.

On the basis of Qing-dynasty school system the Education Ministry published the Promulgation of School System which was called "Renzo School system". After this the government formulated a series of decrees. By the end of 1913 there were Primary School Decree, Secondary School Decree, Education School Decree, Specialized School Decree and College Decree, which are called "Renzo Gumbo School System" along with the "Renzo School System" published in 1912. The new school system made some new provisions on the time limitation of schoolwork, the names of educational institutions and so on. According to the new school system, primary and secondary education respectively lasted for 7 years and 4 years; college preparatory course of higher education lasted for 3 years and the undergraduate college 3 to 4 years; and the old name school in the "Renzo School System" was changed into "schools".

Even though there were distinctive differences in the time limitation of schoolwork and the names of educational institutions between the school system in the end of Qing-dynasty and the new school system in the early Republic of China, these two kind of systems were based on the Japanese educational models.

It was not long after the founding of the Republic of China that Yuan Shakti restored the Monarchy. After that was the rule of the Northern Warlords with the rampant spread of the respect for the Confucius and the restoration of the ancient culture. The education field was also impacted. The education aims in the early Republic of China were "emphasis on the moral education, practical and national education as auxiliaries, and using aesthetic education to achieve morality" But Yuan changed these into "loving country, advocacy of military force, promotion of pragmatism, legalization of Confucius and Mencius, attachment importance to autonomy and abstaining

from edginess”, which were preparatory for his ambition of being the king. But soon the education aims issued by Yuan Shakti ended up accordingly as a result of his defeat. Following the counter flow of ancient culture was the New Culture Movement in 1915, which brought about a new fashion in the field of education and ideology, advocated the freedom of thought and academic freedom, made a transformation from learning Japan to learning and America in the education field. Moreover, the “Renzo Gumbo school system”, after the long-term practice, didn’t suit the requirements of education development as time went by. After many years’ research, the new school system called “Renaud school system” was established by 1922. And the Regulations on National University by 1924 while the College Decree and Rules of College issued in the early Republic of China were abolished.” Renaud School System”, the third school system in modern China, was more suitable for our country’s physical condition. It completed the transformation of Chinese education from limitation from Japan to America, together with the Regulations on National University. Following is the comparative list for the changes of school system in the early Republic of China (from 1912 to 1927).

According to the comparisons above, in the early Republic of China the education system changed from Japanese pattern into American one, with an increasingly looser standard of setting a department. School systems and decrees during 1912 to 1927 were formulated from a perspective of macro-law. In the practice of establishing a college, domestic colleges could be improved according to laws, especially the national universities, such as the Peking University reshaped by Cain Yampi, and National Southeast China University and National Tsinghua University built later. During this time, private universities developed rapidly. “the private colleges were allowable because of the promulgation of College Decree by the Education Ministry of the Northern Warlords Government, who additionally issued the Regulations on Private Education, the first statute law especially intended to the private colleges in modern China”. During this time by the influence of new attitudes, the quantity and quality of private colleges increased. Challenged by the private colleges launched by people and national universities, the missionary universities now changed the academy into college by reforming. And the missionary universities began to register in the Chinese Government as the development of the Reclamation of Magisterium Movement.

**Table 1. The comparative list for the changes of school system in the early Republic of China**

	Renzo • Gumbo school system	“Renaud school system” and Regulations on National University
The comparison of the primary and secondary education	Primary education:7 years Secondary education:4 years	Primary education:6 years Primary-secondary education: 3 years Advanced-secondary education:3 years
The comparison of Higher Education	Three-year preparatory courses	Cancellation of the preparatory course. High school graduates could go to college directly
The comparison of learning object	Learning from Japan: establishment of preparatory course, the integrity course, external organization college-department-lecture	Learning from America: establishment of the board of directors and section; carrying out elective course; structure and organization: college-department-faculty
The comparison of standards to build colleges	The necessary condition of building a college is containing liberal arts or science and more than two parts	One subject could be a college

### 3. The Development of College System in the Middle and Late Republic of China (from 1927 to 1949).

Even though in the early Republic of China, the advocacy of academic freedom didn’t invite good results, the National Government carried out reform following a suit of France after moving the capital to Nanjing in order to further reform the educational administrative system of bureaucracy starting from the academic. This reform was launched by Cain Yampi and Li Sizing, who both studied abroad in France and believed that the France educational an administrative system was the best one.

This reform was divided into two parts. In the central administration, according to the Organization Law of Large Institution in 1927 the education department changed into large institute whose dean was Cain Yuanpei. Cai summarized the characteristics of the large institute as the following aspects: “firstly, academic and education are of equal importance with the large institute as the supreme national academic and educational institution; secondly, the system of the involvement of both dean and commissioners in which the dean takes the full administrative responsibility while the college committee shoulder the duty of negotiation and arrangement; thirdly, plans and practice should go forward side by side and the Central Research Institute should be established to implement scientific research. The labor education should

be advocated by building labor colleges. And the music and art colleges should be built to carry out the glorification education. These three points are the fundamental reasons that we advocate the system of large institute.”<sup>①</sup>In local administration, the administration system of college district was set up according to the Organization Law of College District. And several college districts were set up in each province and district and the college district in Jiangsu province was called Central College District. But there were many contradictions after the establishment of the college district. For an instance, the Association of Principals of Secondary Schools in the Central College District put forward five problems of the college district and required the reform of system of college district. The five problems are: the unbalanced distribution of funds caused the malformed development of colleges; the situation was turbulent and schools at all levels were under the risk of being incriminated; the organization of the council was under the control of the principal while emphasizing on the colleges and ignoring secondary schools; the principal could not cope with the both the school affairs and political affairs at the same

Time, which led to the documents of schools being left not

Answered for three months; the secondary schools were involved in the colleges 'influential affairs. After the establishment of the large college institutes and large college districts, there were problems of their maintenance. By the end of 1929, the government ended these two systems, which indicated the failure of learning France educational pattern.

During the end of 1920s to the end of 1940s, the government of the Republic of China promulgated a series of laws and regulations on education that gradually improved the modern college system of China. During this time, the main features of higher education institutions were as following: firstly, the higher education institutions were categorized as national institution, public institution and private institution whose establishment and relinquishment must be approved by the Education Department; secondly, only those institutions which owned over three faculties among colleges of technology, science, law, literature, agriculture, medicine, business and education could be called college; thirdly, degrees were divided into three types: bachelor's degree(that applied to graduates of colleges and institutes), master's degree and doctor's degree; fourthly, the teachers 'titles were in an order as assistant, lecturer, associate professor and professor. During this time, because of the wars, colleges suffered the fortune of being moved to other places, but the college's strength were maintained and the education system didn't suffer a lot.

#### 4. The Revelation of College System of the Republic of China

According to the National Outline for Medium and long term educational reform and development plan 2010 to 2020: improve the modern college system with Chinese characteristics<sup>①</sup>.The improvement of the college system with Chinese characteristics, which can not be achieved by a single effort, needs a gradual development. In the development process, we should research the roots and take history as a mirror as well as inherit the merits and avoid unnecessary setbacks. The writer thinks that these revelations can be generalized as two combinations and two effects.

Firstly. Combine the foreign education system and the national conditions. During the Republic of China, our country's college system went through a transformation from Japanese pattern to American pattern, finally to French pattern. Finally after the failure, a series of laws and conditions. We need to utilize the college education systems of western developed countries to improve the modern college system with Chinese characteristics in contemporary China. But we should formulate the college education system ,which suit for our national conditions, with a comprehensive consideration of our country's education resources, education expenditure, the requirements of society development, students' diathetic and quality.

Secondly. Combine the macro regulations and education practice. In the beginning of the Republic of China, the government instituted Renzi•Guimao school system, which within the framework of law made some normative requests on modern colleges. But in the aspect of education practice, the internal structure and organization of all colleges were remolded slowly, and only the Peking University accomplished the transformation. By the late of 1920s,the macro regulations were implemented well in the inner parts of colleges with the vogue of some national universities such as the Southeast China University, Tsinghua University and others.

The improvement of the modern college system with Chinese characteristics must be achieved by formulating of laws in accordance with realities as well as monitoring the implementation of the college system in the inner parts of a college, only by doing so can the colleges come up with the time, so colleges cannot lose its vitality because of lacking for innovation.

Thirdly. Attach great importance to the impetus of social system. In the early Republic of China, the Republican System of the Capitalist was established and the education policies of government were basically under the framework of democratic politics, which to a certain extent ensured the independence of education. In the economic system, in the Republic of China, China had gradually been an indispensable part of the global econ-

omy and the specialized technological and managerial personnel's were needed because of the economic development, which promoted the development of sub discipline and the specialization of knowledge in colleges. The perfection of the modern college system in contemporary China requires both the democratic influence of politics and the improvement of educational courses in colleges in accordance with the demands of the economic and social development, thus we can foster talents who suit the needs of the age.

Fourthly. Play the role of teachers on the education front. The educationist, on the education front in the Republic of China, such as Cain Yampi, Zhang Shooing, Tang Wenzhou, Ye Gongchuo, Yan Xiu and so on, played an important part in the modern transformation of the college education. For they experienced the malady of the feudal closed education, as well as be open-minded and seize the world trend. The improvement of the modern college system with Chinese characteristics need to make full use of the teachers on education front to ensure that they have sufficient opportunities to issue express their reform suggestion for the college education system. Conclusion: From the end of Qing-dynasty to the Republic of China, the college education of China, after a 37-year exploration of education reform, experience a fundamental transformation. And there is no absolutely

smooth development and malady is bound to exist. What attitudes we should take to treat these various maladies is very crucial to the future of the college education. The modern college education with Chinese characteristics in Contemporary China can avoid these defects. If we want a better improvement, we should know both the domestic and foreign education system horizontally and the past and present system vertically, thus we can formulate college education system in accordance the rule of education development under the historical background. Only by doing so can strode to the gates of world-class colleges with an air of pride.

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